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USAID/MACEDONIA JUDICIAL STRENGTHENING PROJECT

QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL - JUNE 2013



Mountain Pelister Macedonia

July 10, 2013

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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	Appellate Court
AO	Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council
ACCMIS	Automated Court Case Management and Information System
ABMS	Automated Budget Management System
BAR	Bar Association of the Republic of Macedonia
BC	Basic Court
CAA	Court Administration Association
CBC	Court Budget Council
CIRa	Center for Institutional Development (Macedonia)
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSC	Court Services Council
CSO	Civil society organization
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
ELSA	European Law Students' Association
EU	European Union
GOM	Government of Macedonia
HO	Home Office
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JC	Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia
JSP	Judicial Strengthening Project
JTA	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (also known as Judicial Training Academy, or the Academy)
LPA	Legal Professional Association
MJA	Macedonian Judges' Association
MLA	Macedonian Lawyers' Association
PAR	Performance assessment report
PMP	Performance-management plan
RFQ	Request for quotation
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
Tt DPK	Tetra Tech DPK
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Macedonia Judicial Strengthening Project (JSP) is an ambitious four-year endeavor that started in November 2011. The overarching objective of the project is to help the Macedonian judiciary to evolve as an independent, self-governing, effective, and accountable branch of government capable of meeting the needs of citizens, businesses, and organizations for prompt and impartial protection of their rights and adjudication of their legal disputes.

This quarterly report for April through June of 2013 focuses on the progress and implementation of programmatic activities and tasks aimed at delivering the results required under the Tetra Tech DPK (Tt DPK) contract with USAID. A brief description of the objectives, areas of work, project activities, and expected results follow.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The overarching objectives of the project are to strengthen the role of the judiciary in the separation of powers and to develop broad-based support for rule of law and judicial-sector reform. More specifically, the project focuses on supporting the development of professional associations in the justice sector, developing effective court governance systems and practices, and improving the efficiency and quality of justice.

1.2 AREAS OF WORK

The project's main components are outlined below.

1.2.1 Advocacy and Citizen Participation in Judicial Sector Reforms

The JSP supports the development of the capacities of professional associations in the justice sector to play a leadership role in efforts to reform the justice system and to advocate for the interest of their members; and increases public awareness and participation in the justice-sector reforms and rule-of-law issues.

1.2.2 Independent, Efficient, and Consistent Application of Judicial-sector Policies and Practices

The JSP develops effective court governance systems and practices; increase the role of the judiciary in preparing laws and policies governing the branch; establishes regular coordination and consensus-building on key issues among judicial institutions; promotes more effective and accountable operation of judicial-sector institutions and courts; improve court operations through innovation and technology; and designs and applies performance standards.

1.2.3 Effective Legal Personnel and Efficient Processes

The JSP improves efficiency and quality of justice by providing specialized trainings to judges, and by developing and applying national time standards for case processing; and builds the capacities of court personnel to provide efficient services to court users.

I.3 PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project provides technical and managerial experience to key counterparts in the judiciary; legal professional associations (LPAs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) active in the judicial sector.

The range of support includes a combination of targeted long-term technical assistance, advisory services, project initiatives, and other forms of assistance identified as necessary for each of the results prescribed. Key activities and tasks include the following:

- Identifying and supporting key civil society and professional associations in their efforts to promote civil society support for the rule of law and an independent judiciary
- Building capacity of designated LPAs
- Assist designated LPAs and CSOs in supporting laws, policies, and practices that support judicial independence
- Identifying gaps and/or idiosyncrasies in policies and practices of judicial administration and management and support reform
- Building leadership and management capacities
- Supporting the development of needs-based budgets for the courts
- Supporting education for various sectors of the judicial sector, including president judges, court administrators, and court staff to enhance efficiency and timeliness

I.4 PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The USAID/Macedonia JSP employs a results-driven approach to its planning and programming.

I.4.1 JSP Results Areas

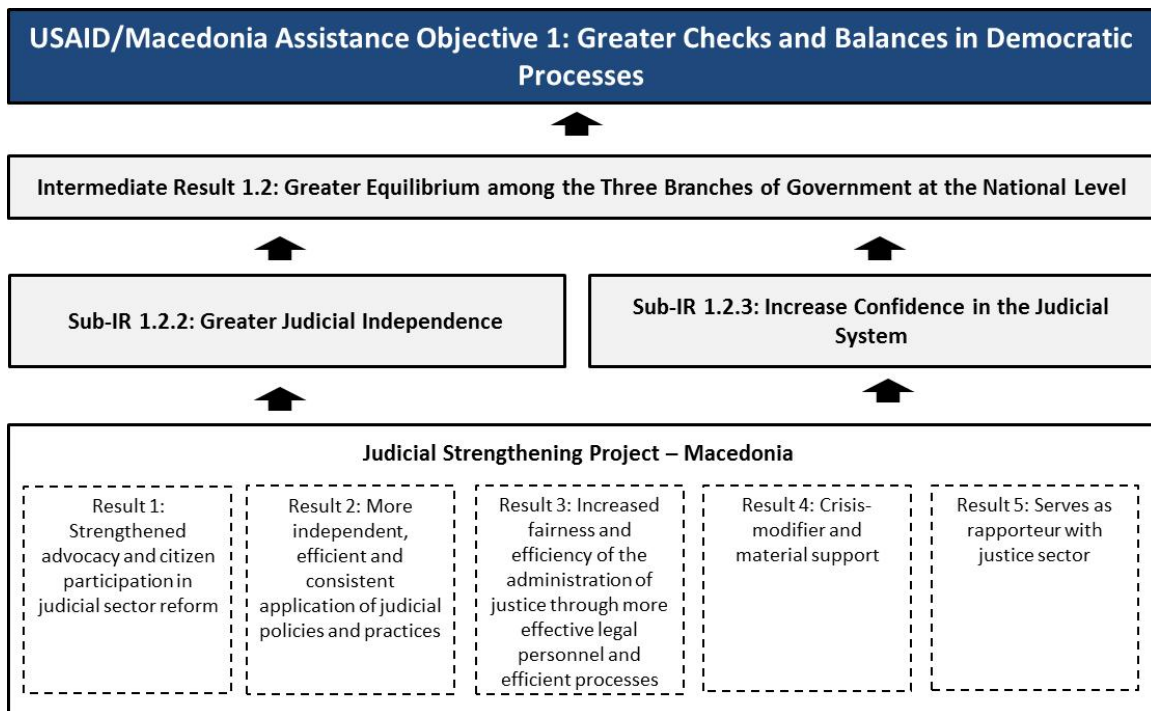
In Year II, the project will continue to focus on five key results:

- Result 1: Strengthened advocacy and citizen participation in judicial sector reform
- Result 2: More independent, efficient, and consistent application of judicial policies and practices
- Result 3: Increased fairness and efficiency of the administration of justice through more effective legal personnel and efficient processes
- Result 4: Crisis-modifier and material support
- Result 5: Serving as *rapporteur* with justice sector.

These five results areas contribute to the USAID Foreign Assistance Framework for Macedonia.

I.4.2 USAID Results Framework

The JSP supports the USAID/Macedonia Assistance Objective I: Greater Checks and Balances in Democratic Processes. Under this Assistance Objective, the project supports Intermediate Result (IR) 1.2: Greater Equilibrium among the Three Branches of Government at the National Level. Specifically, JSP works toward Sub-IR 1.2.2: Greater Judicial Independence; and Sub-IR 1.2.3: Increased Confidence in the Judicial System. The chart below illustrates the conceptual linkages between the JSP and the USAID/Macedonia Framework.



II. PROGRAM-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

2.1 RESULT 1: STRENGTHENED ADVOCACY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN JUDICIAL SECTOR REFORM

2.1.1 Requirement 1.1: A Short, Focused Assessment, Baseline Survey, and Resulting Action Plan on Justice Sector LPAs and CSOs, and the Role they can play in Strengthening the Rule of Law in Macedonia

The JSP previously completed a focused initial assessment of the organizational needs of 11 professional organizations and CSOs, using a subcontractor, the Macedonian Center for Institutional Development (CIRa). JSP selected three organizations for phase II of the assessment:

- The Macedonian Judges Association (MJA), which represents most of the judges in Macedonia. It is active in providing a forum for discussion of various issues facing society, such as the public discussion on the Law on Defamation and key areas of case processing through the Administrative and High Administrative Court.
- The Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), which is a LPA that provides continuing legal education for young lawyers and works to promote and advance the legal profession in Macedonia. MYLA promotes access to public information and supports the establishment of a free legal aid system.

- The Court Administration Association (CAA), which represents approximately 1200 court employees and is very active in proposing and writing new rules and sub-regulations and advocating for reform.

In Phase II, CIRa assessed the performance of the three selected organizations to identify performance gaps and to recommend training and technical assistance packages customized to the needs of each.

The objectives of the second phase of the organizational and performance assessment process were to:

- Prepare a comprehensive set of performance assessment instruments and a capacity-building process and present them to the three selected organizations;
- Conduct a performance assessment of the selected organizations' leadership and personnel; and
- Prepare an organizational assessment of the performance of the LPAs and CSOs and present it to JSP staff members for consideration.

2.1.2 Requirement 1.2: Per the Findings of Requirement 1.1, the Capacity of at Least Two Judicial Sector Professional Associations are Improved

The JSP proceeded with the implementation of Phase III, which started in October 2012 and will run through October 2013, at the latest. Phase III activities include a series of training and workshops to enhance the capacity of the selected organizations. JSP is overseeing the presentation of these workshops. It should be noted that the MJA declined some of the trainings originally agreed upon. JSP filled the vacant trainings with other LPAs and CSOs in order to ensure that the overall capacity building program for judicial sector LPAs and CSOs continues to reach beneficiaries and achieve its objectives.

2.1.2.1 Trainings and Workshops for LPAs for Second Quarter of 2013

Activity/Deliverable	Counterparts	Activity Description	Start Date	Finish Date
Developing Strategies for Strengthening the Membership Base	CAA	• Preparation of the trainings and workshop materials	Apr. 11, 2013	Apr. 12, 2013
Mobilization of Local Resources	MYLA		Apr. 16, 2013	Apr. 17, 2013
Developing Strategies for Strengthening the Membership Base	MYLA	• Implementation of the trainings and workshop	Apr. 24, 2013	Apr. 25, 2013
Organizational and Management Skills for MJA	MJA		Apr. 29, 2013	Apr. 30, 2013
Developing training delivery skills	CAA	• Evaluation of the trainings and workshop	May. 14, 2013	May. 15, 2013
Maintaining effective donor relations	MYLA		May. 16, 2013	May. 17, 2013

Training in Management and Leadership Skills	All for Fair Trials Coalition, ELSA, Chamber of Mediators, Chamber of Enforcement Agents, Notary Chamber		May. 28, 2013	May. 29, 2013
EU Funding Mechanisms	All for Fair Trials Coalition, ELSA, Chamber of Mediators, Chamber of Enforcement Agents, Notary Chamber, BAR Association		June 24, 2013	June 25, 2013

2.1.3 Other Capacity Building Support for LPAs and CSOs

2.1.3.1 Macedonian Judges Association

The president of the MJA, Judge Nikolco Nikolovski, opined that the training sessions should focus more on substantive topics related to judges' adjudicative work rather than on strengthening the capacity of the MJA which was previously agreed to. He stressed that judges have busy schedules, making it difficult to ensure their participation in trainings. It was agreed that the MJA would participate in only two further training sessions: (i) Effective Media and Public Relations and (ii) Organization and Management Skills. The first was delivered in March and the second on April 29 and 30. These trainings intend to provide judges with guidance on how to communicate with the public especially during high profile cases and on the judge's role in court and case management for the efficient adjudication of cases.

Earlier in the year, Judge Nikolovski and Director Arnaudovska of the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (the Academy) discussed with JSP a revision of the Judicial Code of Ethics, which is widely considered outdated and too ambiguous to enforce. Judge Nikolco noted the possible implications for the existing code's conflict with the Law on the Judicial Council and the Law on the Prevention of Corruption. Judge Aneta Arnaudovska presented the latest findings of the Groupe d'Etats Contre La Corruption, EC¹ (GRECO). She recommended that the project consider assisting the MJA in revising the code and incorporating the provisions published on the GRECO website into the Macedonian code. As a result, after researching international standards, the project prepared a revised Code of Judicial Conduct and delivered it to the Judge Nikolco, Judge Arnaudovska and Judge Zafirovska, the president of the JC, on April 10. Due to concerns of the JC president regarding the proposed enforcement provisions, the project revised the draft of the code and delivered it to the parties on May 3. The project stands ready to assist the parties in producing a final version of the code to be acted upon by the appropriate judicial body. To date, however, the parties have not established a working body or other entity to deal with the subject.

¹ States Against Corruption European Commission

2.1.3.2 Court Administration Association

Support for Publication for Court Administration Association (CAA)

The CAA published an initial brochure in 2010 (*"Informator"*), which was recognized by its members as a valuable tool in communicating with its membership, as well as judges, media and other stakeholders. Upon the initiative of the JSP, the CAA members embarked on producing the Association's second brochure, describing its objectives, accomplishments and its activities for 2013. A total of 1500 copies of the publication were printed in Macedonian, English and Albanian in April, with JSP support, and distributed to all CAA members in May. Extra copies were delivered to the media, potential donors and other institutions.

The project continues to support the international recognition of the CAA within the International Court Administration Association (ICAA). JSP supports the networking capabilities of the CAA and has supplied the necessary equipment and technical assistance to enable a representative of the CAA to join international conference calls with the leadership of ICAA.

Support of Annual Assembly of the Court Administration Association



The Annual Assembly of the CAA took place on May 22 and 23, in Strumica with the support of JSP. Fifty-five members of the CAA attended the Assembly, which included court administrators, court clerks, accountants and IT staff.

During the first day of the Assembly, court administrators Olivera Maneli-Bandevska and Sasho Temelkoski presented the current procedures for disciplinary responsibility of court employees, as regulated by the Law on Court Service and the relevant sub-

regulations. The need for this topic arose due to the increasing number of disciplinary cases before the Court Service Council.

At the Annual Assembly, a selected group of ICT administrators from eight courts in Macedonia worked on revisions to ICT job descriptions, in order to unify them nationally and to describe actual tasks and duties in the courts. The selected group of ICT administrators worked on the revision of the job descriptions for the three levels of ICT positions: ICT manager, ICT advisor and junior ICT associate.

The highlights of the Annual Assembly included

- Adoption of the report on the activities accomplished in 2012
- Adoption of financial report for 2012
- Adoption of the changes to the bylaws regarding
 - a) advocacy and lobbying
 - b) selection of members of the managing board and the mandates of the board members and president
- Approval of sub-regulation enabling CAA members to take a loan from the association
- Acceptance of the CAA Strategic Plan for 2013-2015, developed by the CAA Committee for Strategic Planning, facilitated by Embra consultants
- Report and impressions on the study tour in Sweden and Estonia and action plan by study tour participant, Pance Kjosev
- Election of eleven members for the managing board
- Election of five members for the supervisory board

- Discussion of future activities
- Award of Certificates of Appreciation to JSP Chief of Party (COP) Joseph Traficanti and the Deputy COP Nena Ivanovska for the continuous support of the Association since its creation

2.1.3.3 Macedonian Young Lawyers Association

Publications and Public Information

The Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA) is an LPA that provides continuing legal education for young lawyers and works to promote and advance the legal profession in Macedonia. Additionally, MYLA promotes access to public information and supports the establishment of a free legal aid system.

In order to strengthen the association, bolster the participation of its members, and attract new members, the JSP collaborated with MYLA on a brochure describing its accomplishments for distribution to young attorneys, law students, potential donors and partners from abroad.



Law School at FON University Skopje

On April 25, MYLA conducted a presentation for students from the law school at the Faculty of Social Science (FON) University in Skopje. Members of MYLA presented the goals and objectives of the association, the procedure for becoming a member of MYLA, and the benefits and opportunities that MYLA offers.

The promotional flyer for MYLA was disseminated to approximately 40 law students, encouraging potential membership in the association. The representatives of MYLA and FON signed a memorandum for collaboration in future projects, such as lectures at the university by prominent MYLA attorneys in the practical application of law, as well as in other networking functions.



South Eastern Europe University

On May 8, at the South Eastern Europe University (SEEU) in Tetovo, MYLA organized a presentation for the students of the Faculty of Law. The presentation was attended by law students, the dean of the Faculty of Law, Mr. Ismail Zejneli, the DCOP, Nena Ivanovska and JSP Project Attorney Ivan Mojsov.

Members of MYLA presented the goals and objectives of the association, the procedure for becoming a member, and the benefits and opportunities it offers to its members. The promotion was conducted in Macedonian and Albanian. The majority of the students at SEEU are native Albanian speakers. After the presentation, Ivan Sterjovski, a prominent member of MYLA, presented an example of a well-known criminal law case, to illustrate the practical dilemmas of the law and court procedure, followed by a brief Q&A session.

The promotional flyer of MYLA, supported by JSP, was disseminated to the 30 law student participants, with an email list circulated for future communications between MYLA and the prospective members.

The DCOP announced JSP support for the ELSA Juvenile Justice Brochure, which was enthusiastically accepted by Mr. Ismail Zejneli. Juvenile Justice is an area of interest for students and part of the curriculum at the law school. This event will be scheduled in the fall.

2.1.3.4 Macedonian Lawyers Association

The MLA is an organization of lawyers working in the commercial and business sectors. It organizes two meetings or conferences each year, to discuss current legal topics, and publishes a monthly newsletter, *Pravnik* (Lawyer).

On April 5, the DCOP attended a roundtable conducted at a law faculty that was initiated by the MLA. The object of the roundtable was to discuss a new Law on Bankruptcy. The roundtable represented a demonstration of the MLA's new organizational development, since it is the first time such a law has been presented and publicly commented on before it entered Parliamentary.

The president of the MLA, Danica Miladinova, is one of the participants who took part in a study tour for Macedonian LPAs and CSOs to develop their advocacy skills which was supported by JSP and is described later in the report.

2.1.3.5 Public Prosecutors Association

In April, a coordination meeting with the Public Prosecutors Association (PPA) centered on potential assistance from JSP regarding the creation of a website, newsletter and other publications. JSP agreed to provide technical assistance for the website and a PPA newsletter, which the project anticipates completing in July. The brochure is to be prepared by PPA members and staff and will serve as a means of information-sharing among its members and promotion of the association. It will foster visibility and enhance the public relations of the PPA. JSP expects to print 500 copies in Macedonian and English which will be distributed to PPA membership, interested institutions, associations, and the media.

2.1.3.6 European Law Students Association

The JSP supported the effort by ELSA to enhance public information and education through the publication of two brochures. The first brochure was designed for civics education for high school level students to help them understand the structure of government, the courts, and the legal process.



ELSA presentation in Basic Court Veles

Court (AC) Shtip and BC Skopje II in the previous quarter.

The brochure was presented on June 4 at Basic Court (BC) Veles to students from a secondary school in economics education, as well as “Maca Ovcharova” Elementary School which serves students with special needs. Along with the tour of the basic court, students had an opportunity to participate in a mock labor trial held by Judge Lidija Dimova, head of the civil department. It was followed by a Q&A session and an explanation of the functioning of the electronic recording system recently placed in the courtroom. The students were also given a compact disc (CD) of the mock trial. This court visit and presentation was similar to those conducted at BC and Appellate

A second brochure entitled *Juvenile Justice System—Prevention Instead of Punishing* was designed to provide an overview of the system for juvenile justice in the Republic of Macedonia, with an emphasis on prevention instead of punishment. The brochure will be distributed to ELSA members, courts, high school students and other interested institutions and associations. The text within the brochure was

written by ELSA members, and the draft was reviewed and approved by Judge Lazar Naney, an expert in the juvenile justice system. A total of 1,500 copies of the brochure have been printed. The debut presentation and distribution of the publication is planned for BC Kavadarci, the court in which Judge Lazar Naney serves, in the fall.

2.1.4 Off-Shore Study Tour for LPAs and CSOs to Estonia and Sweden

An effective civil society helps hold a democratic government accountable to its citizens by serving as a source of oversight. Legal professional associations and civil society organizations in Macedonia have an opportunity to provide such oversight to the judiciary, strengthening its independence and transparency. However, many of these associations and organizations lack organizational capacity and experience with advocacy.



Estonia and Sweden Study Tour

Seven members of All for Fair Trials Coalition, MYLA, MLA, CAA and ELSA traveled to Estonia and Sweden from April 8 to 18 to learn how local LPAs and CSOs strengthen judicial independence and increase public confidence in the judiciary of their respective countries. In Estonia, the study tour participants learned how to conduct targeted advocacy campaigns and monitor the implementation of reforms in their meetings with human rights organizations.

In Sweden, the representatives from Macedonia met with bar associations and district courts to learn how to influence policymaking through lobbying and how to promote transparency by leveraging the media to highlight issues of corruption or interference in the judiciary by other branches of government.

During May, the participants engaged in follow-up activities by continuing work on the implementation of action plans developed during the course of, and as part of, the study tour. The implementation of these action plans is being guided by the DCOP, who accompanied them on the study tour and who acts as their advisor.

On May 17, JSP supported an event during which the participants from the LPAs and CSO study tour shared the experiences and knowledge gained during the visit of Estonia and Sweden with their colleagues from other associations as well as their plans for the future. Major impressions of the study tour participants consisted of the uniqueness of Sweden's Parliamentary Ombudsman Program, the strength of the Bar Associations, transparency, accountability, openness with the media and the collaboration of human rights institutions with the judiciary. The assemblage also discussed the possibility of forming a broad-based coalition to act as a watchdog in the area of the judiciary, based on similar coalitions in Estonia and Sweden.

On June 17, JSP held the first working session with the participants of the study tour to begin the process of establishing a broad based umbrella association –a coalition of LPAs and CSOs to advocate for an independent judiciary and the rule of law. The project will support a working session on July 4 and 5, when representatives of four LPAs and one CSO who will draft a concept paper and prepare basic documents required for establishing a broad umbrella coalition.

Pance Kjosev, the law clerk in BC Strumica, gave a presentation of the impact of the study tour to Sweden and Estonia at the Annual Assembly of CAA on May 23.

Mesacons/Embra

The JSP staff holds monthly coordination meetings with its training subcontractor, Mesacons/Embra (Embra). On May 29, Embra was reminded to submit the monthly reports on schedule and in electronic format. Discussion continued regarding completion of the survey to establish base lines for measuring progress of the capacity two of the originally targeted LPAs being trained.

A meeting took place on June 7 between JSP, Embra, CAA and MYLA, two of the major LPAs receiving targeted training. The goal of this coordination meeting was to agree on a schedule for remaining trainings and workshops under the JSP capacity building initiative. In addition, JSP and Embra rescheduled the trainings originally intended for the MJA with other LPAs, with which JSP has been working. This represents the first time that the Macedonian Bar Association under its new leadership requested inclusion in a JSP capacity building program.

Macedonian Bar Association

The Macedonian Bar Association (MBA) is an autonomous and independent public service organization, which provides legal assistance according to the Law on the Bar and other regulations. The legal assistance may include providing legal advice, representing clients in negotiations, writing contracts, writing documents for court and other procedures, representing clients before the courts, other state bodies and legal entities, defending suspects and defendants and other types of legal assistance. Membership in the MBA is mandatory. Only those lawyers that are registered with the MBA and licensed by the association may practice law. Members are obliged to pay dues.

The MBA recently elected a new president and board members. The former officials did not elect to participate in the capacity building program supported by JSP. However, the new administration is enthused about the prospect of JSP support. Accordingly, the first coordination meeting took place on June 11. Attending, in addition to project staff members, were Nikola Dodevski, president and Jordan Apostolski, member of the managing board.

Following a brief presentation of the project and its mission by JSP COP Joseph Traficanti, Mr. Dodevski introduced the work of the MBA, their mission, and the proactive approach of the new management of MJA, aimed at re-establishing connections with the appropriate partners, improving the role and the position of the attorneys in the judicial system, improving the relations and communication between attorneys, judges and prosecutors and on including MBA in all matters related to the judiciary. The attorneys responded positively to the suggestion that they support a version of differentiated case management (DCM) as well as the electronic recording of court hearings. MBA also responded positively to JSP's invitation to take part in the remaining Embra trainings, which may be applicable to the organization.

MBA agreed to give to the project an updated roster of attorneys to be included into ACCMIS nomenclature which will make data input much easier for court staff.

2.2 RESULT 2: MORE INDEPENDENT, EFFICIENT, AND CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF JUDICIAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

2.2.1 Requirement 2.1: Legal Framework and Judicial Branch Policies Strengthen Independence, Effectiveness, and Accountability of the Judicial System

2.2.1.1 Review and Advocacy of Laws by the Judiciary

Judicial Branch Forum

The JBF provides an opportunity for the leaders of judicial branch institutions and associations to discuss the progress, current status and next steps in the implementation of the judicial reforms in Macedonia.



Judicial Branch Forum

These topics are important to the ultimate realization of the reform goals (i.e., establishment of the judiciary as a fully independent, effective and self-governed branch of government capable of upholding the rule of law and providing timely and quality services to all citizens of the Republic of Macedonia). JSP hosted a two-day meeting of the Judicial Branch Forum (JBF) on June 19-20 at the Hotel Aurora in Berovo, Macedonia. This was the third quarterly event, initiated by JSP. The location served as a mini-retreat for the top leaders of

the court system and provided a rare opportunity for them to communicate and collaborate with each other as a group. The topics presented and discussed were:

- Presentation and discussion of the Differentiated Case Management concept supported by JSP
- Presentation of the ICT report prepared by JSP expert
- Presentation and discussion on the court budget
- Presentation Staffing Guidelines
- Presentation of the findings on Court Proceedings and Court Efficiency (from the March 22nd LPA roundtable)
- Other topics recommended by the members.

A consensus of the forum members present resulted in the following conclusions, observations and activities:

- Propose amendments to the Law on Courts regarding Supreme Court Jurisdiction (on cases regarding trials in unreasonable time)
- Appellate Courts to prepare analysis of old cases from January to June 2013
- President Judges to ensure complete implementation of Law on Case Management
- Greater emphasis on resolving cases timely basis; violations are costing the courts and judiciary large monetary damages (approximately 160,000 Eros in 2012)
- Amendment of ICT Development Plan for Judiciary with budget projections for replacement of hardware and software as identified in the JSP report on the subject
- Observations and conclusions of lawyers at the public discussion on “Court Proceedings and Court Efficiency” to be posted on the MJA website for judicial comments
- Second public discussion on “Court Proceedings and Court Efficiency” to be held in September with judges, practicing lawyers and public prosecutors

- Review judiciary's ICT needs in light of implementation of the new Criminal Procedure Law
- Upgrade ACCMIS to enable uninterrupted flow of data from the basic courts to the appellate courts
- AC Skopje to request ACCMIS Coordination Body to resolve problem of assignment of cases (detention and temporary measures) to special councils during a court recess
- A working meeting organized with court administrators of the courts with the extended jurisdiction on July 10, 2013 to discuss issues related to court administration, backlog reduction and population of ACCMIS with required data

The JBF event on July 19 and 20 has already paid dividends. The latest upgrade of ACCMIS was related to electronic delivery software developed by the Ministry of Justice. The obsolete hardware equipment in the court does not provide uninterrupted usage of the new software and threatens slowdowns and stoppages in the future. An analysis of this problem was presented to the JBF through the presentation of the "ICT Development Plan for the Judiciary" by its author, the JSP consultant, Mrs. Rozalija Karcicka-Vasilevska. As a direct result, the Judicial Council discussed this long time existing problem with the general secretariat of the Government. The request for financial support and investment in ICT in the courts was supported by the analysis. Accordingly, the ICT budget projection and a 5 year replacement plan were submitted by the MOJ to the Government session held on June 25, 2013.

2.3. Requirement 2.2: Administration and Management Rules, Policies and Procedures, Systems and Practices to Support a Modern Court System; Work with Judicial Sector Authorities and Actors to Establish Effective Governance and Operational Systems for Managing Court Resources – Budget, Human Resources, Facilities, Equipment Etc.; Strengthen Managerial Capabilities and Introduce Performance Standards

2.3.1 Strengthening Judicial Administration and Management Systems, Procedures, and Capacities

Background

The project was charged with conducting an assessment of existing judicial administration and management systems, procedures, and capacities to identify procedural impediments and performance weaknesses within the courts. An array of new institutions has been created within the judiciary, including JC, the Academy, CBC, AO, CSC, and committees addressing specific subjects, such as the automation of case management. These changes are designed to work together to streamline and modernize the judicial process. The assessment made five long-term recommendations and seven interim recommendations. Both the project and its working partners evaluated these recommendations. Some are under consideration, while others have already been implemented by AO, CSC, CAA, and the Forum, with the technical assistance of JSP.

Recommendations include a permanent establishment of the authority and responsibility for judicial administration in the judiciary, expanding administrative policies, and developing new ones. The assessment underscored the need for a robust leadership and administration of the Macedonian judiciary. These, as well as other recommendations, address the absence of effective governance systems and lack of management capacity, exacerbated by poor communication/coordination within the judicial sector. These systems are underdeveloped and have been targeted by the project for in-depth development by the various initiatives described in this report.

2.3.2 Court Service Council and Court Administrators

The project has offered to facilitate two working groups to replace antiquated job descriptions for two major groups of court employees—Court Administrators and Information Technology Specialists. As reported above, during the Annual Assembly of CAA on May 22 and 23, a select group of ICT specialists drafted three job descriptions relating to ICT administration and support in the courts. These documents are being circulated among the ICT professionals in the courts by way of the blog set up by the ICT leaders. When finalized, it will be sent to the appropriate agency for approval.

The project has not yet received authorization to move ahead with the job description for the court administrators due to pending changes in the Law on Court Services in the parliament. When authorized by an appropriate judicial body, JSP will assemble a working group and commence the process of developing updated job descriptions for court administrators.

2.3.3 Harmonization of Decisions of Appellate Regions

The project has agreed to support a leadership team for the harmonization of court decisions. The group, which comprises the four appellate region president judges and heads of departments, will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and harmonize important decisions. The initiative is led by the Academy, which requested the project's support. One of the weaknesses noted is an inconsistent application of the laws in different appellate regions and sometimes between courts of the same appellate region. Different decisions can be reached in different courts although applying the same articles of the laws. This causes legal uncertainty and decreases public trust and confidence in the judiciary. The goal of these working meetings is to discuss and bring to a conclusion a number of questions raised by the court departments. This will provide judges in the first instance courts with an opportunity to decide cases by applying current laws and be guided by the conclusions reached at these harmonization meetings at the appellate level.

The first harmonization meeting took place on April 12, at the Academy. The subsequent meetings will be scheduled quarterly in coordination with the Academy based on the availability of the judges.

The conclusions from all harmonization meetings will be published in a bulletin at the end of the year. This transparency will foster greater public confidence in the judiciary, by providing an identifiable basis for trust in the courts.

2.3.4 Public Information Officers Training

After coordination meetings with the director of the Academy on May 29 and June 10, JSP began planning for a training/workshop for the PIOs. It was agreed that the training would be delivered by Jelena Janevska and Kiril Efremovski, well-known trainers and public information experts. The training participants will be the persons responsible for communication with the public (referred to as “court clerks”), according to the Law on Free Access to Public Information. A representative from the Commission for Protection of the Right for Free Access to Public Information will take part in the training by providing an overview of the law and its ramifications for the courts.

2.3.5 Judicial Council Employee Code of Ethics

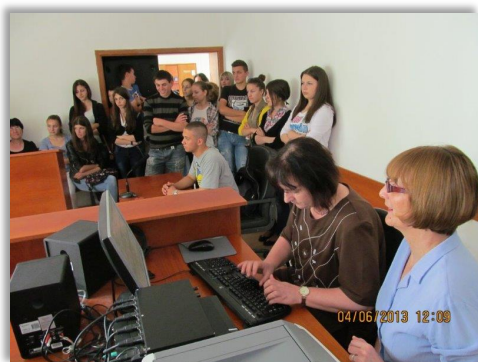
The project was asked to assist the general secretary of the JC, Elizabeta Vaskova, in finalizing the Judicial Council's Employee Code of Ethics. JSP staff met on April 4 with the general secretary and assisted in

revisions which were finalized at a subsequent meeting. The code is now awaiting approval by the JC, which is expected in early July.

2.3.6 Support of Public Information/Education Activities

Student Visits to Courts and Informational Publication for Students

In support of improved transparency, understanding and information about the judicial branch, JSP began a program to sponsor student visits to a number of courts in Macedonia.



Students visit to Basic Court Veles

As reported above, JSP has partnered with ELSA, which produced an informational brochure for high school students describing the judicial branch and the structure, functions and jurisdiction of the courts in Macedonia. On June 4, the BC Veles was visited by the students hosted by the president Judge and court administrator. Students received an opportunity to participate in a mock trial, including role play as judge, public prosecutor and public defender, and were later given a CD copy of the “trial”. During the court visits the ELSA brochure was presented by ELSA representatives and an explanation of the court process was presented by two trial judges, followed by a Q&A session.

ELSA has also completed a second publication on juvenile justice. JSP has printed the publication and will assist in its distribution, in conjunction with other student court visits. The initial presentation on this new brochure will take place at BC Kavadarci.

As previously reported the project is supporting outreach and public information activities by supporting MYLA, its publications and presentations to law faculties around the country. MYLA membership has been working on another publication which was delivered to JSP for review, editing and printing on June 26. The new MYLA brochure will serve as a means of promotion for the association and contribute to developing the membership base while providing visibility and enhancing the media and public relation strategies of MYLA. The JSP considered it important to support this publication in order to contribute to strengthening advocacy and citizen participation in judicial sector reform.

Judicial Council’s Brochure

One of the JSP’s objectives is to help the courts to improve transparency and communication with the public and the media. It will achieve this by printing of public education materials and court reports, and by conducting media briefings and court tours. Accordingly, at the request of the JC, the JSP supported the editing, design, formatting, and printing of a publication — Brochure for the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia — which the JC released in April. The brochure serves as a means of promoting awareness of the Council and its activities. This publication contributes to transparency, as well as to strengthening advocacy and citizen participation in judicial sector reform. Five hundred copies were printed in a bi-lingual publication of English and Macedonian.

2.3.7 Differentiated Case Management (DCM)—Consultancy

While there is a positive trend in the reduction of backlogged and pending cases in the Macedonian judiciary, an advanced case management tool known as differentiated case management, or DCM, aims to improve the situation further. Under the JSP’s direction, Markus Zimmer, a DCM expert, concluded a

report entitled *Case Management Practices in the Macedonian Courts: A Proposal for Designing and Implementing Differentiated Case Management and Time Standards*. It presents the current status, managerial framework, and operational efficiency of the Macedonian court system, and proposes that Macedonia is a likely candidate for successful implementation of DCM.

In May, the translated report was sent to the president of each of the appellate courts and the president of the JC for in-depth review. It was formally presented to JBF on June 20, and the proposal met a positive reaction. It will be further discussed in more detail among judicial leaders, judges, lawyers and others in September through the MJA.

3.1 RESULT 3: INCREASED FAIRNESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE THROUGH MORE EFFECTIVE LEGAL PERSONNEL AND EFFICIENT PROCESSES

3.1.1 Requirement 3.1 Develop and implement targeted specialized trainings for judges, court administrative executives and court staff

3.1.1.1 Training on Mediation and Arbitration

The JSP reaffirmed its commitment to the Academy to support a training entitled “Mediation and Arbitration” and agreed to locate foreign experts for this training, as requested by the director. Two judges from The Netherlands have been identified and negotiations are underway. This program will be presented early in the fall.

3.1.1.2 Study Tour II for Court Administrators and Court Staff

The second JSP study tour will focus on increasing the capacities and skills of the court administrators and court staff. The program will stress coordination and communication among various justice sector actors and institutions in order to strengthen judicial independence and more effective and accountable court operations. Areas of focus will include court administration and management, budgeting and finance, case flow management, backlog reduction, human resources, court facilities, information communication technology and archiving.

On May 30, the RFP for competitive bidding was posted. It is anticipated that the study tour will take place between September 23 and October 3, for eleven days with eight participants, plus a member of the JSP staff. The deadline for proposals is July 10 and evaluation and decision will be made soon thereafter.

3.2 Requirement 3.2: Improve Caseload Processing and Reduce Backlog of Cases

Most courts have made a good deal of progress in processing cases and reducing backlogs. However, challenges remain. As a follow-up to the appellate regional meetings held on March 18 and 21, which addressed backlogs and case processing and other concerns, JSP has contacted the presidents of the appellate courts to offer assistance to any individual courts in their appellate regions in need of remedial and technical assistance in resolving cases in a more expeditious manner. To date, the president judges of AC Skopje and AC Gostivar have assembled teams to work with JSP.

The project staff visited BC Kumanovo on May 20 and BC Skopje I on May 28, with members of the AC’s team to identify regional reasons for delay and fashion solutions. Due to the initiative in addressing backlog by the president judge of Skopje I, the clearance rate has risen to 112% (dispositions over filings) between January and the end of April. This is an impressive turnaround for that court which previously had a negative clearance rate.

Two courts in the Gostivar appellate region, BC Tetovo and BC Kicevo, were scheduled to be visited on June 26. However, the AC Gostivar president judge postponed the visits as a result of other pressing business. It was agreed to re-schedule in late August at the end of the court recess.

3.2.1 Support for Judicial Sector Automation

3.2.1.1 Review and Evaluation of the Status of Judicial Automation

At JSP's request, the on-call ITC expert reviewed the progress of court case automation in order to provide a thorough overview of ICT needs and developments that have taken place in recent years. The report is based on data collected by JSP through a survey of existing hardware in the courts and site visits early in the year. The report highlights the different trends, implementation approaches and problem-solutions in the courts, along with several recommendations including the following

- Scheduled replacement/upgrade of workstations
- Scheduled replacement/upgrade of servers
- Additional memory storage
- Centralized backup of data storage (hardware and software)
- Upgrade printing capacities,
- Regular renewal of antivirus licenses,
- Annual software subscriptions
- Program Plan for electronic delivery
- Solution for storing court decisions electronically,
- Improved standards for computer networks (LAN),
- Five year long-term budget plan for replacement and upgrading of ICT equipment,
- ICT development trends categorized
- Video conferencing expanded
- New equipment purchased in accordance to international standards,
- Green ICT agenda (i.e., environmental responsibility)

As reported under Section 2.2.1 on the JBF, the recommendations regarding funding of ICT equipment over the long-term with a comprehensive plan was presented to the JBR. As a direct result, the Judicial Council discussed this long time problem with the general secretariat of the Government. The request for financial support and investment in ICT in the courts was supported by the analysis. Accordingly, the ICT budget projection and a 5 year replacement plan were submitted by the MOJ to the Government session held on June 25, 2013.

3.2.1.2 Upgrade of Automated Budget Management System

The Automated Budget Management System (ABMS) is the successful budget software program pioneered by the previous MCMP project. It has been integrated with ACCMIS and is the mainstay of the Macedonian courts' budgeting and finance. During this reporting period, the CBC requested an upgrade of the ABMS due to many changes that have been made to laws and sub-regulations, requiring improvements to the ABMS.

Due to changes to the Law on Court Service, in which the AO of the CBC has taken over the administration of the register of court employees, it has additional mandates, including the consideration of requests for employment from the court budget users. In order to fully comply, substantial upgrade and change of the budget software is needed.

The project is in the process of preparing a sole source procurement justification for ULTRA company that developed ABMS in March 2006. This company is in a unique position to upgrade the few modules that are required for better and efficient usage of ICT in the finance and human resource departments of the CBC since it originally developed the software.

3.2.1.3 Electronic Digital Recording of Court Hearings and Trials`



Digital Recording

In the closing days of the USAID Judicial Reform Implementation Project (JRIP), electronic recording devices were installed in 80 courtrooms in Macedonia. The JSP is committed to expanding the use of the devices, which contribute to openness and transparency and protect the judge and staff against unjustified criticism. A procedure was developed that would help overcome objections to the use of these tools from some appellate judges. This process calls for the recording of the full hearing, combined with the judge dictating a summary of testimony and arguments into the record, with the summary being recorded by the court typist in addition to the actual audio recording.

The Court Book of Rules was amended, effective on May 18, to clarify procedures for the use of electronic court recording (ECR) of court hearings. JSP was informed that the courts need additional assistance to realize full compliance with the law. A review of current readiness has revealed that additional training is necessary as well as integration of certain updated software into the system. JSP has agreed with both the original vendor and another outside contractor to offer training and assistance to the courts. It is expected that courts will be in compliance in September 2013.

JSP will provide support for an in-house electronic court recording coordinator at BC Skopje II due to the court's workload. The court and its judges will benefit from the presence and assistance of an in-house coordinator who will support full utilization of the Femida (ECR) software and hardware. The ECR coordinator will provide continuous in-house training and daily support to the users of ECR. The ECR coordinator will also support, on an *ad hoc* basis, the full utilization of ACCMIS in relation to the ECR. The assistance of an ECR coordinator will also alleviate the burden of the two other ICT experts in BC Skopje 2, who support full utilization of ACCMIS. The coordinator will be selected and begin service in the court in September.

3.2.1.4 E-delivery program

The law provides for the eventual implementation of e-delivery of court documents to the courts and to opposing parties in litigation. There are many obstacles to its implementation, including the latest difficulties with electronic signatures. JSP offered additional assistance to the Supreme Court IT Department. However, during June, JSP has been informed by the SC that assistance at this time, in their opinion, is premature. It is anticipated that JSP will be involved in the future and is ready to offer technical support if requested.

IV. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The project is aware of the importance of accurate reporting of events. This quarterly report includes a matrix summarizing each event, training, forum, seminar, round table etc., along with pertinent descriptive information. This report is cumulative from November 2012

Year II – November 2012 – November 2013

No.	Event	Date	Counterpart	Number of Participants	Gender		Result Requirement	Evaluation
					M	F		
1	Training on “Advocacy & Lobbying” for the Court Administration Association (CAA)	November 29 th - 30 th 2012	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA	10	5	5	Result 1.2	4.9
2	Working meeting on "Developing Protocols for the Operation of Courts Working Committees"	December 17, 2012	Judicial Council of RM	8	3	5	Result 2.2	/
3	Training on “Advocacy & Lobbying” for the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)	December 15-16, 2012	MESACONS/EM BRA, MYLA	8	4	4	Result 1.2	4.6
4	Promotion of ELSA brochure “Organization of the court system in RM” to high school students at the Basic Court Tetovo	December 24, 2012	ELSA, Basic Court Tetovo	80	N/A	N/A	Result 1.2	/
5	Training on “Project Planning, Design and Implementation / Project Cycle Management” for MYLA	January 17-19, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, MYLA	9	4	5	Result 1.2	4.1
6	Training on “Preparation of Final Annual Account”	January 18, 2013	Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council (AO of CBC)	36	6	30	Result 2.2	4.7
7	Training on “Establishing and Maintaining Partnership and Cooperation” for CAA	January 24-25, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA	9	2	7	Result 1.2	5

8	Workshop on “Provision of Effective and Efficient Services” for CAA	January 31-February 1, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA	8	4	4	Result 1.2	4.9
9	Training on “Practical Implementation of the Law on Civil Procedure with a Special Emphasis on the Provisions for Electronic Delivery / Implementation of the Law on Electronic Signature and Electronic Data”	February 1, 2013	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (JTA)	48	10	38	Result 3.1	/
10	Workshop on “Preparation of Unified Payment Procedures and Guidelines upon Judges’ Order and other Accounting Documents”	February 4-5, 2013	AO of CBC	18	3	15	Result 2.2	/
11	Workshop on “Provision of Effective and Efficient Services” for MYLA	February 5-6, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, MYLA	9	4	5	Result 1.2	4.3
12	Training on “Disclosing Evidence, Quality of Evidence with Special Focus on the Expert Testimony / Financial Instruments as Evidence in Commercial Disputes”	February 15, 2013	JTA	28	9	17	Result 3.1	/
13	Promotion of ELSA brochure “Organization of the court system in RM” to high school students at BC Skopje 2	March 7, 2013	ELSA, BC Skopje 2	85	N/A	N/A	Result 1.2	/
14	Lecture of JSP COP at the Law School “Iustinianus Primus”	March 11, 2013	Law School “Iustinianus Primus”	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	/
15	Workshop on “Organizational & Management Skills” for CAA	February 19-20, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA	10	4	6	Result 1.2	4.9

16	Training on “Project Planning, Design and Implementation/Project Cycle Management” for CAA	March 11-13, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA	5	2	3	Result 1.2	4.9
17	Training on “Management and Leadership Skills” for CAA	March 14-15, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA	15	8	7	Result 1.2	5.0
18	Training on “Media and Public Relations Strategies” for the Macedonian Judges Association (MJA)	March 18-19, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, MJA	7	5	2	Result 1.2	5.0
19	Training on “EU Funding Mechanisms” for CAA, MYLA and All for Fair Trials (AFT)	March 20-21, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA, MYLA and AFT	23	10	13	Result 1.2	4.6
20	Training on “Media and Public Relations Strategies” for MYLA	March 26-27, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, MYLA	9	3	6	Result 1.2	4.6
21	Judicial Branch Forum (second meeting)	March 15, 2013	SC, CBC, AO of CBC, JC, CAA, Administrative Court, High Administrative Court, President Judges of the four appellate regions, MJA, JTA, CSC	10	4	6	Result 2.1	/
22	Working meeting for the courts of the appellate regions of Bitola & Gostivar on “Case Processing and Backlog Reduction”	March 18, 2013	Judicial Council, Appellate Courts	36	22	14	Result 2.2 & 3.2	/
23	Working meeting for the courts of the appellate regions of Skopje & Shtip on “Case Processing and Backlog Reduction”	March 21, 2013	Judicial Council, Appellate Courts	59	29	30	Result 2.2 & 3.2	/
24	Roundtable discussion for 4 NGOs on “Court Proceedings and Court Efficiency”	March 22, 2013	Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), Macedonian Lawyers	34	18	16	Result 1.2	/

			Association (MLA), All for Fair Trials Coalition (AFT), and Public Prosecutors Association (PPA).					
25	Roundtable discussion for the IT staff from all courts in MK	March 26, 2013	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors (Academy) Supreme Court IT department	52	37	15	Result 2.2 & 3.1	4.0
26	Workshop on “Developing Membership Base Strengthening Strategies” for CAA	April 11-12, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, CAA	25	9	16	Result 1.2	4.6
27	Harmonization of Civil Court Decisions	April 12, 2013	Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, Appellate Courts	41	22	19	Result 2.2	/
28	Training on “Mobilization of Local Resource” for MYLA	April 16-17, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, MYLA	7	3	4	Result 1.2	4.3
29	Study tour for NGOs	April 8-18, 2013	MYLA, MLA, AFT, ELSA & CAA	8	2	6	Result 3.1	/
30	Workshop on “Developing Membership Base Strengthening Strategies” for MYLA	April 24-25, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, MYLA	7	4	3	Result 1.2	4.3
31	Promotion of MYLA at the FON University	April 25, 2013	MYLA	30	N/A	N/A	Result 1.2	/
32	Workshop on “Organizational and Management Skills” for MJA	April 29-30, 2013	MESACONS/EM BRA, MJA	11	8	3	Result 1.2	4.5

33	Meeting with the participants in the Study Tour	May 17, 2013	MYLA, MLA, AFT, ELSA & CAA	21	11	10	Result 3.1	/
34	CAA Annual Assembly	May 22-23, 2013	CAA	55	21	34	Result 2.2	/
35	Promotion of ELSA brochure "Organization of the court system in RM" to high school students at the Basic Court Veles	June 4, 2013	ELSA, Basic Court Veles	40	N/A	N/A	Result 1.2	/
36	Judicial Branch Forum (third meeting)	June 19-20, 2013	SC, CBC, AO of CBC, JC, CAA, Administrative Court, High Administrative Court, President Judges of the four appellate regions, MJA, JTA, CSC	8	3	5	Result 2.1	/
37	Training on EU Funding Mechanisms	June 24-25 2013	Macedonian Bar Association, Chamber of Mediators, Chamber of Enforcement Agents, Notary Chamber, AFFT, ELSA	10	3	7	Result 1.2	4.7
	Total			919	282*	605*		

** The sum of men/women participants is not equivalent with the total No. of participants, because for some of the events the gender breakdown is not known.*

Roundtable Discussion with USAID/Selected NGOs CSOs

Jonathan Hale, USAID deputy assistant administrator for the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, conducted a roundtable discussion for selected NGOs and CSOs on April 23. Participants had a productive and forthright discussion about the experiences of CSOs in carrying out watchdog activities in the rule of law area, the political situation affecting the rule of law and the civil sector in the country, and common

issues and possible areas for regional cooperation among NGOs from the Western Balkans. The COP and DCOP attended the event as representatives of JSP.

Coordination Meetings:

President of the Judicial Council

The COP and the DCOP communicated regularly with the president of the JC to coordinate the efforts of the project with JC and CBC activities and to offer support for the various disciplines within the judicial branch. In May, a request was made by the JC to upgrade the Automated Budget Management System (ABMS) to provide integration with ACCMIS and focused reporting. Updating the Judiciary Strategic Plan and finalizing the Code of Ethics for the staff of the JC were also discussed.

Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council

On May 13, the COP, DCOP and court administration coordinator met with Silvija Janevska, head of the Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council (AO) in order to plan joint activities and assess the need for JSP support for the upcoming period. The meeting focused on the preparation of needs-based budgets and on courts in need of specialized assistance. A subsequent coordination meeting took place on June 7. Ms. Janevska delivered the budget information received from the courts, including sums spent and projected for the preparation of needs-based budgets. The project, in cooperation with Ms. Janevska, will decide which courts are in need of JSP assistance and support.

At a meeting with Ms Janevska on June 24, coordination and planning was completed for a working meeting with the court administrators in order to share best practices in the allocation and proper use of limited resources to be held on July 10th, 2013.

USAID Disability Policies and Procedures

USAID has taken steps to encourage USAID funded projects to be aware of the needs for people with disabilities and special needs. In Macedonia, this segment of the population faces challenges including lack of awareness and little accessible infrastructure. A meeting attended by the COP held at the US Embassy on May 30, gave the projects an opportunity to share their practices for integrating this segment of society and to explore ways to become more supportive in hiring, selection of program sites, terminology, etc. The meeting demonstrated methods to raise awareness of the issues and challenges of the disabled in Macedonia and to encourage projects to be pro-active.

Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors

A periodic coordination meeting between Judge Arnaudovska, the director of the Academy, COP, DCOP and Court Administration Coordinator was held on May 29. Potential trainings and workshops for June and the upcoming third quarter were identified, which include leadership and teambuilding training for president judges, court administrators and heads of court departments. The training will be delivered by Judge Burt Maan, Judge Traficanti, and a court administration expert from the USA between September 16 and 21, 2013. JSP agreed to secure a US-based teambuilding specialist to supplement the training. Also discussed and agreed upon was training for the courts' staff that is assigned to work at the court information office and give information to the public according to the Law on Free Access to Public Information. The training is scheduled for July 12 and 13. In addition it was noted that there is a pressing need for training court couriers. This training will be designed as a "train-the-trainers" module for the heads of delivery services of the courts. JSP agreed to identify potential trainers and schedule the training in accordance with the availability of the trainers. Tentatively, this training is planned for September.

Judge Arnaudovska also raised topics for potential future trainings and workshops, in cooperation with the Academy, including the important concept of e-learning. The Academy has the equipment in place for distance learning but has not regularly used it. The Academy invited JSP to evaluate the feasibility of using the equipment. JSP may support such an effort on a pilot basis after an assessment of its feasibility with JSP's goals and objectives.

Other areas being explored by JSP and the Academy include: (i) Training for lay judges, perhaps on the Law on Civil Procedure, (ii) Training for ICT staff, (iii) Electronic publication of the legal harmonization meetings and (iv) Training for court police.

On June 10, a subsequent coordination meeting reviewed the details of upcoming trainings, including training for Public Information Officers (PIOs) planned for July 12 and 13. It was also agreed to conduct leadership and team building training for president judges and training for court couriers in September.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND PERSONNEL MATTERS

4.1 Project Attorney

After the second probation period ended in May, the JSP offered Project Attorney Ivan Mojsov a permanent contract until the end of the project. Mr. Mojsov's performance progressed nicely, and he has become a valued member of the JSP team.

4.2 Global Fellow Intern

Tetra Tech DPK provided a Global Fellow intern, Uma Arunachalam, who started work on March 15 and is expected to be with the project until June 15. She was of great assistance to the project, helping to update the JSP website, writing reports, assisting in research, assisting at conferences and events, preparing templates for future reports, writing summaries and briefs of events, preparing PowerPoint presentations and more.

4.3 Staff Coordination of Budget Projections and Evaluation of Work Plan and Progress on the Project Management Plan for 2013 by JSP Professional Staff

On May 15, JSP staff had an internal coordination meeting to assess budget expenditures to date and to assist the finance administrator in coordinating project resources with projected activities, events and study tours. On May 30, JSP professional staff met to evaluate progress and accomplishments to date, and to evaluate progress towards the year 2013 work plan, with particular emphasis on the upcoming quarter.

V. DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The JSP is fully committed to the needs of the disabled and to making the necessary adjustments to assure full participation by all in the project programs and events. This includes the targeted participants of JSP events, as well as facilitators and trainers who may have a disability.

Similar to the visits to the Basic and Appellate Court in Stip, and the Civil Court in Skopje conducted in the previous quarter, during this reporting period, the project reached out to other schools which serve children with special needs and has included them in one major event. Special needs children were included in a visit to Veles basic court where they were integrated with students from other schools. The event included a presentation of the ELSA's brochure with basic information about the court structure and procedures in Macedonia and a guided tour of the court.

Ten students from "Maca Ovcharova" elementary school for children with disabilities participated in the event in Veles on June 4. They also had an opportunity to attend a mock trial of a labor dispute and learned about the functioning of the audio recording system installed with USAID support in this court. The students received the recordings of the mock trial on a CD at the end.

The JSP will continue its proactive approach of including persons with disabilities in its activities and raising awareness of their needs within the court system in Macedonia.